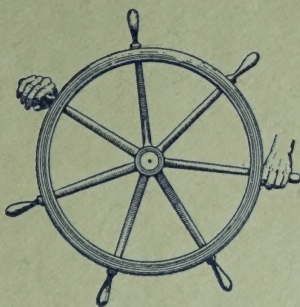


ABRAHAM LINCOLN
THE HAND ON THE HELM
A
PAGEANT
FOR
HIGH SCHOOLS
NORMAL SCHOOLS
AND COLLEGES



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*Permission must be obtained for use
as a Pageant*

Written by
W. T. MILLER
PORTLAND, ORE.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

First Narrative (1-10)—Two Wardens—red—hold flags

Second Narrative (11-20)—Two Wardens—white—hold flags

Third Narrative (21-30)—Two Wardens—blue—hold flags

Cut loose the pack! Now howl, ye hounds of Hate
Scent out the land with cunning violence
In yonder cabin lies the child of fate
On a high mission sent by Providence
Hark, angels sing upon this wintry morn
That sang not since the Lord, our Christ was born.

Blow, winds of hate and lay that roof-tree low
On her rude bed the mother lies at rest
Now shatter Freedom with one mighty blow
And crush the offspring on her naked breast
That little one in coming days will be
Earth's greatest champion of Liberty.

Cold greeting that, his advent in a storm
The race unconscious of his humble birth
One gentle bosom burned to keep him warm
No herald cried aloud to warn the earth
The roof and gable dripping with the snow
The embers on the hearth but faintly glow.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

What must we grant the cruel potentate?
The sword, the battle-axe, the bow, the spear
Wealth, honor, fame, the friendship of the great
All these—to crown the conqueror's career
The man who comes to earth with God's decree
Needs not be clothed but with simplicity.

His sire seemed ever with his lot content
Yet thrice he moved to find some fitter place
In her who bore him every virtue blent
The mother's tenderness, the woman's grace
Was this abundant, or scant heritage?
To help him on his earthly pilgrimage.

His not the fault a cabin his abode
Its rafters and its chinks, its blanket door
'Twas there he bent his back to lift Life's load
There dreamed of destiny on puncheon floor
There knew the pinch and pain of poverty
There drank to dregs the cup of penury.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

When the plain larder failed him to suffice
He sought the storehouse of the birds and bees
Roots, greens, and nuts would often him entice
And the sweet fiber stripped from forest trees
For Nature told her secrets all to him
And gave him strength of arm and length of limb.

What soil will nurture this misshapen shoot?
The wind swept spaces of the boundless West
There will the tree of Liberty take root
And stretch her mighty arms the loftiest
Warmed and refreshed by prairie sun and dew
Among the pioneers where life is new.

His frame and features were not formed by rule
Awkward in mien, giant in strength and limb
To all his foes the butt of ridicule
Yet though they mocked they feared and honored him
To all his age a hidden mystery
The crown and climax of humanity.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

He laughed the tedious hours of life away
He never wearied on his upward climb
Performed the common duties of the day
And faced his foes with courage most sublime
Unerringly and eager as a sleuth
He climbed up year by year the slopes of truth.

Ne'er did affection find a truer friend
His matchless love for mother and for maid
Nor gentleness a stronger manhood bend
In sorrow o'er two graves in cypress shade
The colors and the odors of the flowers
Ne'er breathed their healing into sadder hours.

What was the task of this great soul to be?
Row rafts, rend timbers, measure calico?
God dropped him down from out eternity
A nation's tyranny to overthrow
He heard the cry of vassals in the land
And took the scales of Justice in his hand.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Watch the young eagle when he tries to fly
He cannot rise, his pinions beat the ground
But soon the fleecy cloud-lands catch his eye
With growing confidence he circles 'round
Then proudly soars a distant home to seek
And view creation from the mountain peak.

How can our eagle ever hope to rise
So poor, so awkward, so illiterate?
How can he ever soar to lofty skies?
When wings are lacking what can compensate?
A great cause gives the soul a lifting power
And brings a man to greatness in an hour.

He trod with other men the beaten path
But in his eyes the vision of a seer
He saw the coming tempest threaten wrath
The cry of wretchedness assailed his ear
He loved all races, colors, creeds, and caste
One noble burning purpose held him fast.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Of uncut stone the builder makes his walls
To mock the tooth of time for centuries
Artists adorn the niches and the halls
With sculptured ornaments and tapestries
God's strength and beauty will this soul endue
God is the builder and the artist too.

Here is a workmanship that will endure
Within the image of the Infinite
Will adamant, mind masterful, heart pure—
All held in equipoise by native wit
And never since the human race began
Could God more truly say, "This is a man."

And what a task! Upholding all God's laws
Rebuking statesmen hand in hand with wrong
Standing to champion a branded cause—
Stirring the conscience of the list'ning throng
Rousing the church and nation blind with gain
To wash their garments from a bloody stain.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The axe, the scales, the shovel and the chain
Were but dumb prophets of the man's estate
When he the heights of power would attain
And rule the people as chief magistrate
His mighty hand will write the captive free
And save the nation for high destiny.

He grasped the rudder of the Ship of State
And held her steady in the awful storm
Upon the outcome all the nations wait
Only such captain could such deed perform
Four million bondsmen now no longer dumb
Cry out, "Our great deliverer has come."

In the great task our leader undertook
He sounded all the depths of agony
When fierce rebellion all its pillars shook
He saved the temple of our Liberty
He gave a touch of mercy to the laws
And put a muzzle on the blood-hound's jaws.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

What were the weapons that our champion used
To end the conflict and restore the State?
Self-mastery when he was most abused
Forgiveness when his friends were most ingrate
Mercy and charity he ne'er forgot
No captives bled beneath his chariot.

He knew the witchery of human speech
Of burning messages he knew the art
A mighty multitude he could beseech
Convince the head and captivate the heart
Or by cold reasoning without a flaw
Stir men to praise or silence them with awe.

How did he conquer? By his childlike trust
He knew the strength and justice of his cause
The dwelling place of evil was the dust
Was not Jehovah back of all his laws?
He sought in humble reverence the throne
And asked for power and wisdom not his own.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

And how sublime his faith in common folk!
He knew the virtue of the simple heart
And how heroically they bore the yoke
And how they sacrificed to do their part
Was not all patience, honor, virtue, good
Enshrined within the common brotherhood?

And every soldier on the battle line
Was steeled with courage as he marched to death
Each made his tender heart a holy shrine
And blessed and praised him with expiring breath
The utterance of his honest homely name
Would kindle in each heart a sacred flame.

Such was his patience when he sought for light
He wore the darkness out till came the dawn
He wore the daylight out till came the night
Then if the light came not he waited on
If light came not he put all care away
And waited for it still both night and day.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

And when the times oppressed him with a load
Too irksome for a mortal to sustain
When jaded nature oft refused the goad
He courted fancy in some lighter vein—
His nerves relaxed, new light shown in his eyes
He laughed with folly at his own surprise.

He used his tact with lands beyond the sea
To spring the traps by all his critics set
To check the cunning of the enemy
The damning doubts of all his Cabinet
He knew the craft, course, current and the gale
Knew when to tack, spread canvas, shorten sail.

Of his great heart who made the proudest boast?
The lonely mother who had sent her all?
The weary soldier sleeping at his post?
His wounded comrade in the hospital?
He gave to these and others in distress
The look, the touch, the word of tenderness.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Ten men with signs of calling ask the questions
Soldier—uniform—Sword Gun Brand—replies

Who is this giant stalking through the land?
With fear and plague and hate upon his breath
The flaming sword, the bullet and the brand
His all and only arguments with death

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

What means this haze that now obscures the light?
What means this angry rumble in the air?
What mean those lurid flashes in the night?
Those sullen growls like tigers in their lair?

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Why do the trumpets blare, the clarions blow?
Why sounds the fife, why loudly beats the drum?
Why do so many twilight fires glow?
Why do these fugitives in terror come?

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

What means this measured tramp of human feet?
The prance, the wheel, the dash of cavalry?
What lies so still beneath this winding sheet?
Why have the thickets hushed their melody?

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

Why are those seaward rivers running red?
Why are so many households desolate?
Why is this horse, this horseman lying dead?
Why is the bluebird calling for his mate?

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A fair land torn with canister and grape
A people in suspense, in anguish dumb
A soldier plodding home with wounds agape
And loved ones waiting those who never come

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

The bugle calls, the home is rent in twain
One dons the grey the other wears the blue
Opposing rights—each will his right maintain
And each in death will to his trust be true

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

The land is all laid waste through pride and hate
The blood of countless thousands stains the sod
Fair fields o'er grown, plantations desolate
In stern obedience to this demigod

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

What will this monster's appetite appease?
Are marching men a debt or just a loan?—
Sad victims of both hunger and disease
How many will return to claim their own?

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

What mean four hundred thousand silent graves
Where blue dressed heroes lie within the tomb?
Why are four hundred thousand matchless braves
Now wrapped in gray beneath magnolia bloom?

This is the pathway of the conqueror
The harvest this, the aftermath of war.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Peace with dove and olive branch makes proclamation
Ten women with signs of calling welcome Messenger

The messenger of Peace is at the door
With tread, with touch, with voice of gentleness
She would the lost to empty folds restore
She would the wrongs of all the land redress

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

Two great commanders standing face to face
Each brother gives to each a brother's hand
Each one resolving to remove all trace
Of bloody war and by the Union stand

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The weary watcher may retire to rest
The plowman in the field may sow his grain—
The bluebird unafraid may build her nest
The buttercup and daisy bloom again.

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

The Springtime hues are donned in every grove
There is a hint of fragrance in the air
The chatter of the thicket is of love
Life is in bud and blossom everywhere

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

The grass is green again, the skies are blue
The tents are folded in the bivouac
No bugle calls reveille or review,
No summons for defense or for attack

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Forge from these blades of steel the mighty share
That turns the furrow in the fertile soil
Let all these spear points changed to sickles dare
With brawny arms the strain of honest toil.

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

Fill up the trenches, throw the ramparts down
Leave not a remnant, not a trace of strife
'Tis better far to merit our renown
In deeds of mercy done in peaceful life.

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

Take down the signs of valor from the wall
Reward for deeds of violence is vain
Let all such things be covered with a pall
Behind them are the visions of the slain.

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The long lost son may now come home to stay
And hungry hearts have all the love they crave
The coats of blue and grey be put away
The flowers may bloom upon the new made grave

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

Gather around and let affection burn
Complete the circle with the empty chair
Let holy memory now fill her urn
Now sing his favorite hymn and breathe a prayer.

We welcome thee, sweet messenger of Peace
Heal all our wounds, bid all our striving cease.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Two wardens in black hold flags half mast
Ten persons in mourning offer lament
Tragedy in black replies in nine stanzas
In tenth stanza Columbia speaks of Sacrifice

Our April sun is darkened by eclipse
An awful discord breaks into our song
We touched our cup of joy with trembling lips
Our noble champion has suffered wrong.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

The Nation's heart of joy is pierced by pain
The April breeze is winged with taint of death
Shall all his matchless service be in vain?
Hangs all his matchless manhood on a breath?

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The whole world stands aghast this April day
The hand of Fate has snapped the brittle thread
The spirit of the martyr soars away
The man of all the ages now is dead.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

The Nation dons its somber badge of grief
The whole round world is quick to sympathize
In tears and songs of comfort and relief
And words of praise that will immortalize.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The sword's surrender did not end the strife
This is the highest price for freedom won
One with our soldier dead he gave his life
The Nation's sacrifice her chosen son.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

How sweetly human was this mighty man
How kind his heart, how honest was his face
A wondrous life, how narrow was its span
These arms, this heart did all mankind embrace

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

What change has touched him since that natal day
A bit of treasured flannel was his all
What transformation in a bit of clay
He lays in State within the Capitol.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

His hands lie powerless, his voice is still
His brain is tenantless, ear dull, eye dim
His tender heart and his imperious will
Will not again in life respond to him.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

How great the reach of life, high, deep and vast
Past is the gloom of his Gethsemane
He sways the future as he swayed the past
He justly merits immortality.

In this cold deed of hate the world may see
The vilest murder wrought since Calvary.

They hide him deep 'neath fragrant wreaths of bloom
They bear him solemnly into the West
They place him tenderly within the tomb
Close to the heart of those who loved him best.

The Nation and the world counts him to be
The richest sacrifice since Calvary.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Columbia stands by bier with flag
Twenty persons pass slowly and speak
The Wardens, Soldier, Peace and Tragedy pass

We let the diadems of monarchs rust
But trace our hero's footprints in the dust.

Alone afoot he ventured to explore
Mysterious regions never trod before

Through all his life he played the major part
The will and mind were prompted by the heart.

He shucked the past then threw the shucks away
But saved the corn to plant some future day.

This great and good Samaritan of time
Belongs to every color, creed, and clime.

In many hearts where faith and hope burn low
Fanned by his breath the fires begin to glow.

Review his deeds each one in honor done
We count ourselves unworthy of such son.

Chill, penury presided at his birth
He was the gift of poverty to earth.

In every land his name in praise is sung
His kindly deeds are told by every tongue.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Say, have we left enough of honest clay
In labor to beget such man today?

Great three score years ago, and great this hour
Parties and men march in his name to power.

The weary wand'rer thinking life but vain
Looks up to him and then plods on again.

The little seedling grew into a tree
Whence sweetest singers poured out melody.

His gathered riches all mankind will bless
Truth, humor, wisdom, courage, gentleness.

With his own hand he blotted out our stain
God grant that it may not appear again.

A beacon light a huge and tow'ring form
A rifted rock a shelter from the storm.

Now write his name among the good and great
He lead a race to manhood, saved a State.

This simple common man shows us the way
That God can mould a bit of honest clay.

When on that April morn he sank to rest
He went to Him who knew and loved him best.

Costly memorials will soon decay
His fame will grow as ages pass away.

